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Letter dated 15 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued today by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea, concerning the relocation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement on the relocation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea

15 February 2008

In the past few days, the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNMEE officials based in Ethiopia have been issuing a string of attributed and anonymous statements both distorting the reality regarding the status of UNMEE in the country and levelling unwarranted accusations against Eritrea.

The Government of Eritrea again wishes to underline the following salient points so as to set the record straight:

1. The critical legal and moral obligations of the United Nations, including that of the Office of the Secretary-General, must remain the maintenance of regional peace and security through respect of the rule of law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. In this respect, Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrean territories in violation of the Charter and the substantive provisions of the Algiers Peace Agreement cannot be excused or tolerated under any pretext. The Government of Eritrea has made numerous representations to the Security Council, including to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on this account since the end of November last year, when the Boundary Commission concluded its final demarcation decision and terminated its operations. Sadly, instead of seriously and properly addressing the kernel of the problem, the Office of the Secretary-General appears to have chosen to dwell on peripheral matters and to accuse Eritrea unjustifiably. This position is not tenable or acceptable.

2. The oft-repeated insinuation of looming "danger to the lives of UNMEE troops in Eritrea" is unfounded and perhaps designed to cover up the failure of the United Nations to address the fundamental problem cited above. Furthermore, it constitutes a disservice to the well-known hospitality that the people and Government of Eritrea have accorded to UNMEE since its deployment in the country in 2000.

3. The Government of Eritrea cannot discuss or acquiesce in "temporary relocation" or some other new "arrangement" that is at variance with the provisions of the Algiers Peace Agreement. The mandate as well as the circumstances and modalities of the deployment of UNMEE and the termination of its functions are indeed explicitly stipulated in the Algiers Agreement.

4. The Government of Eritrea again calls on the United Nations Security Council to redress the situation and ensure the removal of the Ethiopian occupation of Eritrean territories, which is in breach of the Algiers Peace Agreement and the Charter of the United Nations.